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7_9_13 Minutes

Park and Recreation Commission
Minutes

Tuesday, July 9, 2013 @ 7:00 PM
Approved

The Park and Recreation Commission came to order at 7:00 PM on the second floor of Town Hall on Tuesday, July 9, 2013. Members in attendance included: Leslie Mayer, Shirley Canniff, Don Vitters, Jen Rothenberg and Jim Robillard. Also in attendance was Director of Recreation Joseph Connelly. Members of the public included Sarah Trainor, Sue Doctrow and Ruth Schmidt.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Canniff motioned to approve the minutes of June 11, 2013 and June 25, 2013, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg and approved 4-0-1.

Open Forum – Public Comments

No public comments.

Thorndike Off Leash Area Discussion on Age Limits for Children

Based on previous discussions, Molly Flueckiger put together a survey for off-leash users. Sue Doctrow was present to discuss the results and stated that the survey was done online only. It was sent via email to the off-leash user groups and Thorndike Friends group. The results of the survey indicate that the majority of respondents do not favor additional age limits for children and many suggestions were offered. Mr. Connelly stated that it was a good survey, well balanced and included a great level of detail. Ms. Rothenberg stated that she appreciated all of the effort put into the survey and also wanted to make clear that prohibiting/banning children was not something the Commission ever discussed.

Sarah Trainer, a mother of two young children ages 4 and 6, does not favor the age restrictions. Ms. Trainer feels that signage could be clearer and that there could possibly be a separate sign highlighting rules for children. Ms. Trainer is a graphic designer and would be willing to help with signage.

Ms. Doctrow stated that users who are bothered by the activities of children in the OLRA should communicate with each other.

Ms. Doctrow talked about educating users, and while Mr. Connelly feels that education of users is an important component, it cannot be imposed by a rule. Ms. Doctrow mentioned the possibility of putting together a pamphlet for children's rules and to include some material from local dog trainer, Betty Yip, on how to interact safely with dogs. When dogs are registered at the Town Clerk's office, owners could receive this material.

Mr. Connelly will contact Ms. Trainer to work on signage for children in the OLRA based on the existing rules. Ms. Doctrow and Ms. Mayer both felt that the language of the rules should be strengthened to indicate that children in the OLRA must be "supervised" not just "accompanied" by an adult.

Mr. Connelly stated that anything that is decided can be revisited in the future and that it is still a learning process. When there is a safety concern, the Commission needs to and will look at the situation.

The Commission all agreed to start with separate signage for children. If this does not resolve the issue in a positive way, it will be

addressed again by the Commission at a later date.

Capital Improvement Update

Florence Avenue Playground – The first construction meeting was held. Placement of the temporary fence, which will be installed on July 10th, was discussed. Demolition and base grading for drainage will begin thereafter. The equipment has been ordered with delivery scheduled for late August. Mr. Connelly is hoping for a September 15th completion. Mr. Connelly will talk to an arborist for a price on trimming back the pine trees around the old tot playground. Mr. Connelly met with Mike Rademacher from the DPW to discuss the sidewalk. DPW can install an asphalt sidewalk and remove the dirt strip beside the curb. The approximate cost is \$10,000 to \$12,000. Ms. Mayer asked Mr. Connelly to look into funding options with DPW.

Buck Field Renovation – N/A

Capital Request for FY 2014 – ADA study, Hibbert and North Union Spray Pool will be discussed in September.

Mr. Connelly would like to move forward with the playground inspections, as he feels it is best to do it while kids are out of school. The Commission agreed. Mr. Connelly will need to get three quotes.

North Union Spray Pool had an electrical issue related to the school reconstruction. Mr. Connelly stated the issue should be fully resolved by the end of the week.

Special Requests

International School of Boston – Picnic would be held on September 15th at Robbins Farm Park with the usual detail requirements. They requested use of the soccer fields also, but it is the first major weekend for the Arlington Soccer Club so reserving the fields is not possible. Mr. Vitters motioned to approve, seconded by Mr. Robillard with Ms. Rothenberg abstaining 4-0-1.

Friends of Spy Pond Fun Day – Annual fun day will be on September 7th at Spy Pond Park. Ms. Canniff motioned to approve, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg and approved 4-0.

Bench Donation Request – Ms. Gloria Cushing would like to donate a park bench at McClennen Park near the ballfield. Mr. Connelly has received requests for seating at McClennen Park. The Commission agreed to approve the request contingent on identification of an appropriate location for the bench.

Funny Boat Productions – Marcy Gunther and Eric Handler would like to film a music video on Fire Protection at Robbins Farm Park on Wednesday, July 17th and Thursday, July 18th. Local area residents will not be affected. Ms. Rothenberg motioned to approve based on clarity of the dates and a fee to be determined, Ms. Canniff seconded, approved 5-0.

Rink and Recreation Update

Mr. Connelly talked about the Reservoir Fun Thursdays. Throughout the summer on Thursdays, special events will be held from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM. Mr. Connelly received great feedback on the announcement about these events.

Ms. Mayer handed out a Draft Reservoir Beach Improvement Survey for feedback. It can be done online and will be handed out at the beach. Mr. Connelly will talk with Joan Roman about sending it out electronically. The Commissioners were asked to provide any suggestions, so that it can be finalized.

Mr. Connelly reported that the Rink and Recreation Budgets for FY2013 were both met.

Commission Liaison Reports

Mr. Connelly stated that he knows of two people are interested in becoming Associate Commission Members. Mr. Vitters also has spoken with someone who is interested.

Ms. Mayer talked about the Town Master Plan. A series of public input meetings on various topics begins this month. The first meeting about Cultural/Historic/Natural Resources/Open Space/Recreation will be held on Tuesday July 16th from 7:30 to 9:30 with a second meeting scheduled for the end of August. Goals will be defined and discussed at both meetings.

Other Business

Mr. Connelly received a request for AHS Football to use Buzzell Field three times per week. Mr. Connelly will meet with the Athletic Director to discuss.

Ms. Mayer was contacted by the Conservation Commission and shared their concerns about the condition of the vegetation on the Spy Pond shoreline. Mr. Connelly stated that DPW should be involved in the discussion for any possible solutions. Mr. Vitters volunteered to be involved in the discussion as well.

Ms. Canniff motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Vitters and approved 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:
Joseph Connelly, Director of Recreation